DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 325 246 PS 019 210

AUTHOR Witmer, Judith
TITLE Development of an Inservice Training Program for Teachers in the Parent Education Child Study Lab Setting.
PUB DATE 90
NOTE 59p.; Master's Practicum, Nova University.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Practicum Papers (043)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College Faculty; *Community Colleges; Early Childhood Education; Faculty Mobility; Higher Education; Inservice Teacher Education; *Laboratory Schools; Parent Education; *Teacher Orientation; *Teacher Responsibility; *Teacher Role

ABSTRACT

A parent education instructor implemented a practicum intervention designed to address the information needs of part-time teachers in the parent education child study laboratory. The teachers wanted information concerning their roles and responsibilities in the laboratory programs. The laboratories were located at a community college with a staff of 30 parent educators, 50 classroom teachers, and a support staff of 4, that served over 1,000 students. The intervention targeted 14 teachers who were expected to continue working in the program. Objectives were to: (1) increase participants' understanding of program goals; (2) increase teachers' knowledge of their responsibilities concerning the job; and (3) decrease teacher turnover. In an effort to meet these objectives, a 1-day orientation session was held. Practicum evaluation data indicated that the intervention was successful. Related materials are appended, including survey forms and a list of goals and objectives for community college parent education programs. (RH)

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Development of an Inservice Training Program for Teachers in the Parent Education Child Study Lab Setting

ED325246

by

Judith Witmer

Cohort XXXVII

A Practicum Report Presented to the National
Master's Program for Child and Youth Care Administrators
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the degree of Master of Science

NOVA UNIVERSITY
1990

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July 21, 1990
Date

Signature of Student

Abstract

Development of an Inservice Training Program for Teachers in the Parent Education Child Study Lab Setting. Witmer, Judith M., 1990: Practicum Report, Nova University, Master's program for Child Care Administrators. .
Descriptors: Administrators/ Community Colleges / Early Childhood Education / Inservice Teacher Education / Laboratory Schools / Orientation / Parent Education / Teacher Workshops

There was no existing system for the orientation of child study lab teachers to their roles and responsibilities. These teachers worked with children, parents, and a parent education instructor and it was essential that they understand their roles in this Parent Education Program.

To meet the need for inservice training, a practicum was designed and implemented to help the teachers to: (1) increase the understanding of program goals; (2) increase information on job responsibilities; and (3) decrease job turnover. To attain these goals, a one day orientation session was developed. The program had a two part focus: (1) to develop a maintenance factor for each participant; and (2) to develop the task of understanding the existing goals.

Surveys indicated that the teachers had gained in knowledge concerning the goals and objectives of the organization. The follow-on phase of this orientation program will involve the development of a teacher's handbook and a mentor system for all new entering teachers. Related materials are appended.

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After Ms. Witmer's initial survey was returned, she developed and facilitated an in service orientation for children's teachers is the Parent Education Programs at Bellevue Community College. This occurred on March 23, 1990. She included the program goals, and teacher's responsibility while working in the child study labs. A brief needs assessment was included in the session as well as a discussion of the original survey and future needs. A mentor program is being developed, as is a handbook for the children's teachers.

Practicum Title Development of an Inservice Training Program for Teachers in the Parent Education Child Study Lab Setting

Student's Name Judith M. Witmer

Cohort 37 Date July 10, 1990

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Instruction in the skills of parenthood is available to the residents of this writer's state through community colleges and vocational-technical institutes. Parent and infant classes, toddler and preschool parent cooperative classes, and some specialized programs are offered to meet the needs of the families throughout the state. Approximately 20,000 families are enrolled in these classes.

Each facility in the state offers programs in parent education to meet the needs of the community. The writer's community college serves a large suburban area with low income to high income families participating in the program. There are thirteen sites for three and four year olds, twelve pretoddler and toddler sites, two infant sites, and six special focus programs. This community college has the largest parent education program in the state, with a staff of thirty parent educators, fifty classroom teachers, and a support staff of four serving over 1,000 students.

Each parent education class features a child study laboratory in which students and their children participate together. The children are guided by an experienced teacher and the parents assist with a variety of activities

in the lab. The teacher's role is to develop an appropriate children's program, to demonstrate effective guidance techniques, and to utilize the talents and energies of the parents to enrich the program.

The child study lab teacher position is part time. Teachers are required to have experience working with children. Most teachers have either an Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education or a four year teaching degree in elementary education or child development. The years of experience range from beginning teachers to those with over ten years of teaching background. Approximately 12-15 teachers are new to the program each September.

A parent education instructor works with each child study lab. The instructor is responsible for the parent education portion of the program, for conferences with parents, and for providing assistance to the teacher and the parents in their efforts to establish a preschool program of high quality.

The writer is a parent education instructor in three classes and also serves as the child study lab teacher for these classes. Twenty years of teaching experience, along with fourteen years of teaching parent education classes, has enabled the writer to combine both jobs. This opportunity provides the teacher/instructor a unique position for working with the parents and the children and seeing the work setting problems from both perspectives. Because of this experience, the writer

presents in-service workshops to child study lab teachers and serves as a consultant to other parent education instructors at the community college.

Chapter 2

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Statement

There was a lack of information for teachers who taught in the parent education child study labs concerning their roles in those settings. The lab teacher's position was wide in scope. A teacher worked with the parents, the parent education instructor, and the children. It was essential that the teacher understand the roles and responsibilities connected with the program. Teachers were expected to perform in a very visible role, with parents and the parent education instructor assisting and supporting the teachers in the lab classes. Few written guidelines existed to help teachers understand this complex role. Previously, most of the information had been given through verbal communication.

Due to the part time nature of the lab teacher's job, the child study labs have approximately 12-15 out of 50 teachers new to the Parent Education Program each year. Formerly, the parent education instructors from the college were the primary source of information for the teachers concerning their roles and responsibilities in the lab programs. Instructors from the Parent Education Program were assigned to each child study lab and they

were responsible for working with the teacher in developing and interpreting the child study lab program. There was no established orientation program for these instructors to help the teachers understand their role.

If the Parent Education Program was to function at maximum potential, it would be important to provide job descriptions and goals of the program to all of the staff through orientation programs, inservice training, and/or written materials. The development of individual teachers was directly related to the successful development of the entire program. Teachers who understood their role in the organization would be more likely to develop a commitment to the program and be challenged to give their best efforts to the organization.

Documentation

One of the goals of the Parent Education Program stated that the parent education instructor and the children's teacher should work as a team in the classroom. This teamwork, in turn, would help to maintain a well developed program. The Parent Education Program has been established for 50 years in the author's state and the program at the community college has grown during the last ten years to provide parent education classes for over 1,000 parents within the boundaries of the college. Parent education instructors and child study lab teachers have often observed that there are no existing guidelines

for teachers that explain in depth the job description of a child study lab teacher. With the growth of this program, a more structured approach for helping teachers understand their roles and responsibilities was needed.

In order to help determine the needs of teachers, a needs survey for lab teachers was developed. (Appendix A: 48) During August of 1989, this survey was sent to a target group of 25 teachers who had been teaching in the child study lab program from one to five years. The purpose of the survey was to determine what the teachers felt were their needs for orientation and for inservice training. The experience of these teachers ranged from no years of formal teaching to 12 years of teaching before joining the Parent Education Program. More than half of these teachers had been teaching less than five years. Seven out of 21 teachers indicated that they would not be returning to the program in the fall of 1989. Of the 25 teachers contacted, 21 replied. The response to the survey was varied. Fifteen responded that they were provided with adequate information for orientation by their instructor, while seven related that they did not receive adequate job orientation. An open-ended question was asked, "What information would have been helpful to you?" This question received responses from 15 teachers. Three listed needs concerning teaching techniques and 12 wrote requests for more information concerning their role in the program. Half of those who replied to the

survey also indicated that they needed more information in the area of working with parents.

It was indicated from the survey that seven preferred group orientation as being the most helpful form of teacher orientation. Three teachers preferred orientation with their individual instructors and 11 indicated that they would find a handbook for teachers as the most useful form of information. There has not been an orientation program for a group of new teachers and there was no teachers' handbook.

Although information from the survey did not indicate an overwhelming need for information concerning the job description and role of the child study lab teachers, there were many written comments that indicated that more information would be helpful to the teachers. Since 14 of these teachers were returning to the program, providing this information would help to facilitate the growth of the teachers and thus increase the positive impact of the program for the children and parents. The 14 teachers returning to the program would be the target group for this practicum project.

In a review of the inservice workshops provided for the child study lab teachers, it was found that from 1982-1989, 18 workshops were provided fro teachers. All these inservice workshops provided information on curriculum and skill development for teachers. The content of these workshops included use of the autoharp, bulletin

board design, whole language development, music and movement. Although these are worthwhile topics for teachers, there has been no development of an orientation for all teachers which could serve to help the teachers better understand their roles in the Parent Education Program. This unbalance in training was reflected in the survey response to the question concerning needs for more information. Out of the 21 teachers who responded, 12 requested more information concerning the functioning of the entire Parent Education Program.

A sample of the parent education instructors was interviewed informally concerning the needs of the child study lab teachers. The instructors indicated that the teachers needed an understanding of the organizational framework because of the visibility of the teacher within the program. Parents observed the teacher on a daily basis within the classroom. It was important for the teacher and the instructor to work as a team, as this teamwork sets the tone for the class. The instructors related that this was often difficult, because the teachers did not have a complete understanding of their role in the program. The role of the parent education instructor was to work with the teacher in developing and interpreting the children's program, as well as to assist the parents' efforts in providing a program of high quality for their children. The instructors who were interviewed felt that if the teachers had more complete written guidelines,

then the instructors would be better able to help the teachers to understand and work to achieve the goals of the program. Teachers, the instructors felt, often did not understand or appreciate the involvement of the parent education instructor in the children's program. Ideally, the teacher and the parent education instructor should provide a support system for each other. Each contributing their expertise to enrich the class.

A needs assessment was gathered at the September, 1989 meeting of the parent education instructors and child study lab teachers. In informal discussion was led by the Parent Education Coordinator after the lab teachers and instructors had been together at an opening workshop. Comments indicated that the teachers often felt isolated from the rest of the program. There was also a need expressed for more information for teachers concerning their roles in the organization, and for information concerning working with parents.

Analysis

The documented lack of teacher orientation in the Parent Education Program produced underlying currents of dissatisfaction, isolation, and lack of support within the program, as indicated by the Needs Survey for Lab Teachers (Appendix A: 48). In the past, the orientation of the teacher has been the responsibility of the parent educator. Seven teachers indicated that their instructors

had not provided them with a thorough orientation. There were five new instructors on the parent education staff for the 1988-1989 school year. It was not known if these instructors had a working understanding of the program and whether they gave an adequate orientation to their teachers. Another factor influencing the orientation of lab teachers was the importance the instructor placed on the orientation process. In either situation, the consequence may well be that teachers may be left on their own to find their place in the overall program as they begin their immediate jobs of working with the children in the child study lab.

More than half of the teachers surveyed had been teaching for less than five years. According to Katz's original research (Katz, 1977), beginning teachers are in various developmental stages, each needing a specific type of training. Due to lack of experience, the teachers are coping to survive within their classroom and then begin to focus on specific skills needed to work effectively in the classroom. Although the focus of beginning teachers is on the many challenges within their classrooms, the research also indicated that employees need to have a common understanding for the program so that the efforts of all involved can be directed towards the goals of the program. (Jorde-Bloom, 1988).

The Needs Survey for Lab Teachers (Appendix A: 48) also indicated that seven out of 21 teachers were not

returning to the child study labs. This turnover could be another symptom of the problem. Teachers who do not have support in the work setting and are not highly involved in the program may often burnout or drop out of the system. The Parent Education Program has grown to serve over 1,000 parents involving 25 parent education instructors and 60 teachers. This program growth has not provided the time or resources to adequately develop an orientation program for the child study lab teachers. Consequently, the teachers mainly worked with one instructor in an off-campus site and were isolated from other classes and their staff members. This isolation and lack of support could lead to a lack of professional attitude and create burnout.

The needs assessment, which was a verbal exercise at a group meeting in September, along with subsequent interviews with teachers and parent education instructors at the community college all repeated the theme of a need for the teachers and the instructors to come together in order to develop a philosophical understanding of the entire Parent Education Program. Teachers felt that they were isolated from the rest of the program, not only by distance of facility, but by lack of support from the parent education instructor of the program. The teachers wanted more support from the instructors in terms of helping them understand and carry out teacher responsibilities. Teachers also felt a need for job goals

and clarification. Jorde-Bloom (1988) stressed the importance of establishing a goal-setting process within a group. As this process improves the strength of the staff, it also serves to improve the quality of the children's program. Ouchi (1981) in his Theory Z Study believes that philosophical clarity is needed in order for the workers to made decisions with consistency. Once workers have a clear perception of the goals of the organization, they should develop a sense of understanding and trust that all those involved in the program have goals that are fundamentally compatible. These studies point out the need for employers to establish goal making sessions into their programs so that the quality of their programs can be achieved.

Early childhood education is a demanding profession. Nationally, the staff turnover exceeds 30% a year (Ross, 1984). Morale, stress, and burnout problems have been identified by many researchers in the field. The benefits of a well developed orientation and inservice training program have a definite impact on the morale of the staff and their productiveness to the group. In a field where there is a growing need for well trained teachers and where there is a rapid growth of programs, it will be necessary to provide a structure of orientation that will provide for the development and support of each teacher. In providing support for teachers, it is important for administrators to provide an organizational climate which

includes a dimension of collegiality, emphasis on professional growth (including policies, procedures, and responsibilities), and a goal consensus (Jorde-Bloom, 1986). The Parent Education Program had much to gain in terms of maintaining a well developed program and creating a positive staff morale and commitment to the existing program.

Chapter 3

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of this practicum was to develop, through effective strategies, methods to provide more information for teachers who taught in the Parent Education Child Study Labs, concerning their roles in these settings. This goal would also relate to an increased team effort between the teachers and the parent education staff and would help to develop a staff of trained, committed teachers who would remain with the program.

The following goals were projected for this practicum;

1. To increase the understanding of program goals by the target group of teacher by utilizing the state's Parent Education Guidelines (Appendix B: 51) in a group inservice meeting.

The achievement of this objective will be measured with an evaluation of effectiveness through a pre- and post-evaluation survey which each participant will complete (Appendix C:52). Questions will be designed to measure the knowledge of the teachers before and after the inservice workshop. The results of the post-survey, when compared to the pre-survey, will show an increase

in the number of teachers who have a better understanding of the program goals as they relate to the lab teacher's job.

2. To increase the amount of information concerning job responsibilities, in the child study lab, in working with parents, and in interactions with the parent educator, for the target group of teachers through an inservice training program.

The results of the pre- and post-survey (Appendix C: 52) will indicate how the target group of teachers perceived their job before the training session as well as how they perceive their jobs after the session. The results of the post-survey, when compared to the pre-survey, would show an increase in the number of teachers who had gained information concerning their role as a teacher as it relates to the children, the instructor and the parents.

3. To reduce the number of turnovers in the target population by providing information which will help the teachers understand their importance to the entire program and help erase their feeling of isolation.

This reduction of staff turnover will be indicated

by the target group in the post-survey. The majority of targeted staff will plan to return to their positions in the fall of 1990.

The results of the post-evaluation survey will also be compared to the earlier Needs Survey for Lab Teachers Appendix A: 35) used in the documentation phase of this practicum project. This comparison will show an increase in the understanding of their job as a child study lab teachers. It will also indicate the degree to which their needs have been met.

Chapter 4

SOLUTION STRATEGIES

Existing Programs and Models

Well established early childhood programs in the United States have already developed pre-service and inservice programs for their staffs. In a model for regional Head Start training, developed in 1973, Lapides (1973) feels that one of the main purposes of orientation is to assure the commitment of the teacher to the program. The Head Start programs have local as well as regional training programs for their teachers. The beginning orientation program takes place with a large group of teachers together for two days. Part of this time is spent in small groups to help build support for each other and for the program. These early developed training programs are still in use today as an integral part of staff development for Head Start teachers.

The Nova University study guide for Child and Youth Administration (Webber, 1984) emphasizes that they way in which an employer is oriented upon entering the program will have an important effect in determining the employee's relationship with the organization. One means of helping new employees understand the organization is to make available a personnel policies handbook. This book is best used as a reference manual for the employee. Personal

interaction between the employer and employee come first in the development of employee motivation and commitment.

Others who are prominent in the field of early childhood education point to the need for the community college program to develop a more comprehensive orientation and inservice training program for teachers who teach in the parent education lab classes. The establishment of goals and objectives also creates a professional climate for all the staff members. Radomski (1986, p.23) has outlined 14 characteristics for the Early Childhood Education Profession for the National Association for the Education of Young Children. The first characteristic is that, "Members of a profession should be encouraged to help shape and/or clarify the professional mission." Schweinhart (1987), in working with the High/Scope Program, has identified seven critical components from research which blend together to form a high quality program. Orientation of staff members was included as one of the critical components for a quality program. High/Scope programs begin with an orientation program and then inservice training continues on a monthly basis. This extended program helps to build professionalism and support for the entire staff.

In the enabler model of supervision developed by Hegland (1982), the importance of developing program philosophy and goals that both the supervisor and teacher agree on is stressed as the first stage of the model.

Hegland stresses that it is also important for the supervisor and the teacher to develop mutual trust and respect before professional growth can take place. This mutual trust is developed through active listening by the supervisor and by using their role to ensure that program goals are met and allowing teachers the autonomy of deciding how to meet these goals.

A correlation was found by Smith (1983), between a high involvement and low-burnout. Smith believes in the development of a social support system in the work setting. Thus, orientation and inservice meetings would lead to trust and growth within the work setting. The social aspect included any type of group maintenance procedures, such as coffee and refreshments, comfortable surroundings, and time to get to know one another. Neugebauer (1984) has also found that careful attention must be given to the social needs and the affiliation needs of the people who work together. Suggestions for structuring opportunities include scheduling time for social interchange as well as ideas. He stresses that new staff members need special attention as they begin working in an organization. To help assure that new people will feel welcome and comfortable, he suggests that experienced teachers can become as active part of the orientation team. They would provide a mentorship for each new member. This would involve helping the new employee learn procedures and meet others in the

organization.

A project in the Urbana School District #116 in Champaign County, Illinois (Katz, 1977), was designed to train elementary teachers through the use of advisors that would provide assistance when asked by the teachers. The program was viewed as valuable by the teachers, although it was a difficult task for the advisors due to the time constraints. The importance of this program is the evaluation that indicates that some of the traditional modes of pre-service and inservice training need to be replaced with programs that provide individual help for teachers.

Scallan (1988) found that whole group staff development often eliminates teaching to the learning styles of some teachers. When administrators are planning staff development programs it is important to develop methods that meet the personal learning styles of the staff members. Right and left brain orientation and personal learning styles have become increasingly important to all who are involved in working with people in a learning situation. Those who are left brain learners rely on auditory information while right brain learners prefer written instructions. Scallan's findings are backed up by researchers in the field of learning styles and right and left brain development (Gardner, 1983; Springer, Deutsch, 1981). These studies are finding that learners learn in a variety of ways and thus learning experiences

need to structured so that those learning can involve both sides of their brain in their own particular learning styles.

Jones (1983) also states that it is important to consider the learning styles of teachers. In her studies of adult learners, Jones emphasizes that administrators need to consider the learners' needs. She identifies their needs as being a safe and comfortable place for learning; having available resources; and learners need to be encouraged to play. Jones also believes that an important aspect of adult learning is peer support. Learners should be encouraged to structure their goals within their peer group. Through this sharing exercise, networking develops. Jones' focus is on college teaching, but it is valuable when considering adult learners in any situation.

Miller (1989) stresses that motivation is an important factor in the participation of an employee. Through training, learners are motivated by active learning through a variety of verbal, visual, and hands on experiences. Staff members are also motivated when the training involves the goals and values of the organization. Miller also stresses that credit given to learners through extra pay, college credits or special benefits also increase motivation to participate in a training situation.

In working with any type of groups, the Washington State Training Manual for Employers (1978) stresses the

need for a balance of group functions. Task functions would include information-giving, coordination, and orienting, and initiating. To balance these functions which help groups get things done, are the functions of maintenance which helps develop a favorable climate for the group. Group building and maintenance functions include encouraging, mediating, relieving tension, and standard setting. These important group dynamics must not be ignored when an administrator is planning group activities. The success of the group activity will depend on this balance of task and maintenance functions.

In this review of the literature it is apparent that the need for staff development is an important factor for administrators to consider for their programs. Maintaining employees with a commitment for the job to be done is an important factor in all product oriented business endeavors and service oriented programs. With the growth of early childhood programs and the shortage of teachers, it will be important to build a pool of dedicated teachers to work in all programs for young children. Our nation has a need for these early childhood teachers to remain in the profession. If these teachers are going to remain within these programs, employers must give the teachers the professional status that they deserve. The teachers in the child study labs must also be treated as professionals. Orientation and inservice programs need to be designed for the teachers to help

them develop a better understanding of the Parent Education Program and their roles as teachers. Although the need for orientation of employees is well established through the literature, there were few detailed reviews on how the orientation and training of staff should proceed. Orientation should not be left to chance, but is an important factor in the development of a program and a staff as cited by Webber (1984), Schweinhart (1987), and Hegland (1982).

In order to identify strategies developed by other Parent education programs in the state, a brief survey (Parent Education Coordinator Survey, Appendix D: 40) was sent to twenty coordinators. Ten responses were received. Four programs had developed group orientation programs and six out of the ten had left the orientation of child study lab teachers as the responsibility of individual instructors. The responding programs are smaller than the author's parent education program and in two of the programs, the instructor also functions as the lab teacher. Two of the coordinators who had developed group orientation inservice training related that the programs had been successful and had led into other inservice meetings throughout the school year. All orientations covered goals of the program, explanations of the Parent Education State Guidelines and working with parents.

Two questions were asked to determine what was being done to motivate teachers to attend the orientation. The author felt that this was an important issue, as stated by Miller (1989). Two of these programs pay their teachers to attend orientation while four programs have attendance required and it is written into the lab teacher's contract.

While only one program had developed a teacher's handbook, three coordinators are in the process of using a mentor system to aid in teacher orientation. The coordinators using the mentor program felt that the program developed a positive factor in achieving unity within the groups and gave the teachers a sense of belonging to the program.

Solution Strategy

In order to achieve the objectives of increasing the understanding of the program goals and increasing the information for teachers concerning their responsibilities and effective inservice orientation program was developed. The need for orientation of employees was well established throughout the literature, however, there were few detailed reports on how the orientation and training of staff members should proceed. In the review of the literature this writer discovered a pattern of information concerning staff training that leads to a blending of ideas which will serve to develop a comprehensive three part orientation program. The three

ideas referred to in the literature consisted of a need for a basic orientation plan at the beginning of an employee's assignment to explain goals, objectives, job responsibilities, and to help develop a positive work climate; the use of established employees to help new employees adjust to the program; and the development of a program that would involve the various learning styles of the employees. The first part of this strategy was addressed through this practicum and the foundations were developed to be used the following year for the remaining two parts of the orientation program.

The first task was the development of an inservice orientation program for the child study lab teachers. This orientation had a two part focus. The first focus was to develop a maintenance factor to help each participant feel at ease and to help the teachers get to know one another. The importance of including social support was emphasized by Smith (1983) and Neugebauer (1984). Both felt that it was equally important for employees to feel at ease and familiar with those they worked with, which would lead to a more positive commitment to the organization.

The second focus of the inservice orientation program delt with the task functions of the orientation. Ouchi (1981), Jorde-Bloom (1986), and Hegland (1982) all have emphasized the importance of helping new employees understand the goals and objectives of their program.

All believe that in order to develop employees with a feeling of professionalism, they must be given an orientation which emphasizes the goals of the organization. Closely connected with the emphasis on organizational goals is the presentation of job descriptions to employees.

As the inservice training time was limited to one day, careful planning was needed to present an efficient program that would focus on the maintenance and task functions. Scallan (1988) and Miller 1989) indicate that effective learning within a group will take place if methods are used which will meet the personal learning styles of the participants. This would include planned verbal interactions, appropriate visuals, and hands on experiences. For reference materials, handouts were developed which would be the beginnings of a guidebook for new teachers. Increasing the understanding of program goals and increasing the amount of information concerning job descriptions for the target group of teachers was achieved by presenting this inservice program. Furthermore, the increase in the initial information presented to the target group and the increase in social involvement with the target group led to a more professional attitude and a reduction in staff turnover of this group.

The second phase of this orientation plan was to develop a structure for a mentor program that could be used in the fall of 1990 with the new teachers coming

into the system. The writer was influenced by Jones 1983), Katz 1977), and Neugebauer (1984) who found that peer support through a mentor program which helped to develop networking was an important component of an orientation program. These peer counselors helped meet individual needs of those involved and helped new staff members to become involved with a personal commitment to the existing program.

The final component of this orientation project involved the development of a handbook for new teachers, containing the goals and objectives of the Parent Education Program, an expanded job description for teachers, and resources for the teachers as they begin their assignments in the child study lab. The development of this handbook began with the handouts created for use in the inservice orientation workshop. Additional information was gathered and compiled into a handbook that could be used by each individual teacher for information and resources. Scallan's findings (1988) concerning the need for the development of programs to incorporate the various learning styles of the teachers convinced this writer that an important part of the inservice program should be provided in written form for those who are visual learners and/or for those who may be overwhelmed by the initial introduction to their complex job responsibilities and need more time to absorb the information which was presented within the framework of the orientation program.

Implementation Plan

In order to implement the proposal, the development and action necessary were organized into three tasks. During the first two months of the implementation period, a strategy for inservice orientation was developed. During the third month, the inservice program was presented and evaluation of the process took place. The third task was to develop a system for mentors to be assigned to the new teachers, as well as the compilation of information necessary for the teachers' handbook. This task was a follow-on to the practicum project.

Task 1 - A plan for inservice training was developed using available information on staff training.

Step 1: The orientation process was outlined and a time line was developed that could be used with the plan (Appendix E: 41)

Step 2: Handouts were developed to supplement the orientation process.

Step 3: Visuals were developed to supplement the orientation process.

Step 4: The proposed plan was submitted to the Parent Education Coordinator for approval.

Step 5: A pre-and post-evaluation was developed to be used to determine if the objectives for the proposal were met (Appendix C: 38)

Responsible Individual: The author was responsible for

the development of the orientation and evaluation plans and submitted these plans to the supervisor.

Time Required: Two months for the program development and submission for approval.

Task 2 -Implementation of the inservice workshop for the target group of teachers.

Step 1: The date, time, and place were set that were compatible with the community college schedule and child study lab. There was difficulty scheduling this date due to the various conflicts at the college and with the individual teacher's schedules. The time frame of the training session had to be shortened in order to accommodate the target group.

Step 2: The facility in which to hold the orientation was secured.

Step 3: Contact was made with the target group of child study lab teachers by mail to invite and inform them of the orientation program. Although the time had been set to accommodate the various child study lab schedules, only ten out of the target group of nineteen could attend.

Responsible Individual: The author worked with the Parent Education Coordinator and the secretary to schedule the

meeting and to notify the target group.

Time: Two weeks.

Step 4: The inservice orientation was held as planned in steps two and three and the pre-and post-evaluation (Appendix C: 52) was given to the target group attending the orientation.

Responsible Individual: The author was responsible for implementing the inservice workshop with assistance from one parent education instructor and one child study lab teacher. In order to help each participant feel at ease and to help the teachers get to know one another, a simple salad luncheon was served. This was provided by the author. Participants were asked to bring dessert for one that they would share, which would tell something about themselves. This was a excellent activity for developing social support.

Time: One day was planned for this orientation program, but it was impossible for the teachers to take a full day off from their child study labs. The time had to be shortened to one afternoon.

Step 5: The pre- and post-evaluation data was compiled for evaluation purposes.

Responsible Individual: The author was responsibe for compiling the data. The author found this difficult to do because directions had not been made specific enough on the survey. Participants chose more than one answer on some of the questions which made evaluating the data more complicated.

Time: One week.

Follow-on

Given the positive outcome of the inservice orientation program and the approval of the Parent Education Coordinator of this proposal, the Parent Education Program has a functional inservice orientation program that can be implemented to help new child study lab teachers become familiar with the responsibilities of the job and the goals of the Parent Education Program. A structure for the development of a mentor program to facilitate the positive adjustment of the lab teacher to the program and a working handbook to serve as a resource for the teacher are being developed as the second and third phase of the orientation program. This three part orientation program provided a beginning framework for staff development. These procedures can be used at the beginning of each school year for the orientation of new teachers. Teachers will become familiar with program goals and job responsibilities. This orientation

process will also help maintain loyalty to the staff so that there will be a higher probability that staff turnover will be lower. A structure for the use of mentors will also be in place to aid in the development of a positive organizational climate. A resource handbook for the teachers will also be available to provide on-going information concerning the Parent Education Program. This program will be made available to other Parent Education Programs throughout the state. These procedures could be a useful resource for ideas concerning staff development

Chapter 5

RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

An inservice orientation program was developed to help a target group of teachers better understand the goals and responsibilities of their positions as child study lab teachers. The goals of the practicum, as outlined in Chapter Three, were to increase the understanding of program goals; to increase information for job responsibilities; and to decrease the number of turnovers in the target group.

Results

At the conclusion of the implementation of the orientation session, the ten participants had completed a pre- and a post-evaluation survey. The results of the post-survey were compared to the pre-survey to determine if the objectives had been met. The measuring tool was designed with nine questions. Three questions were chosen to find out what the participants knew about the state Parent Education Program guidelines. Six of the questions related to the teachers' perceptions of their job descriptions and responsibilities. The surveys were analyzed by noting if there had be an increase in the number of correct responses and a decrease in the

number of incorrect responses on the survey after the inservice training session. The following information is visually represented in Figure 1.

The questions asked on the survey related to the important components of the Parent Education Program. Teachers were given a list of goals and were asked to identify the major goal of the child study lab. In the pre-survey a variety of the goals were chosen along with six correct answers. In the post-survey six had still chosen the correct answer, but there were fewer extraneous answers.

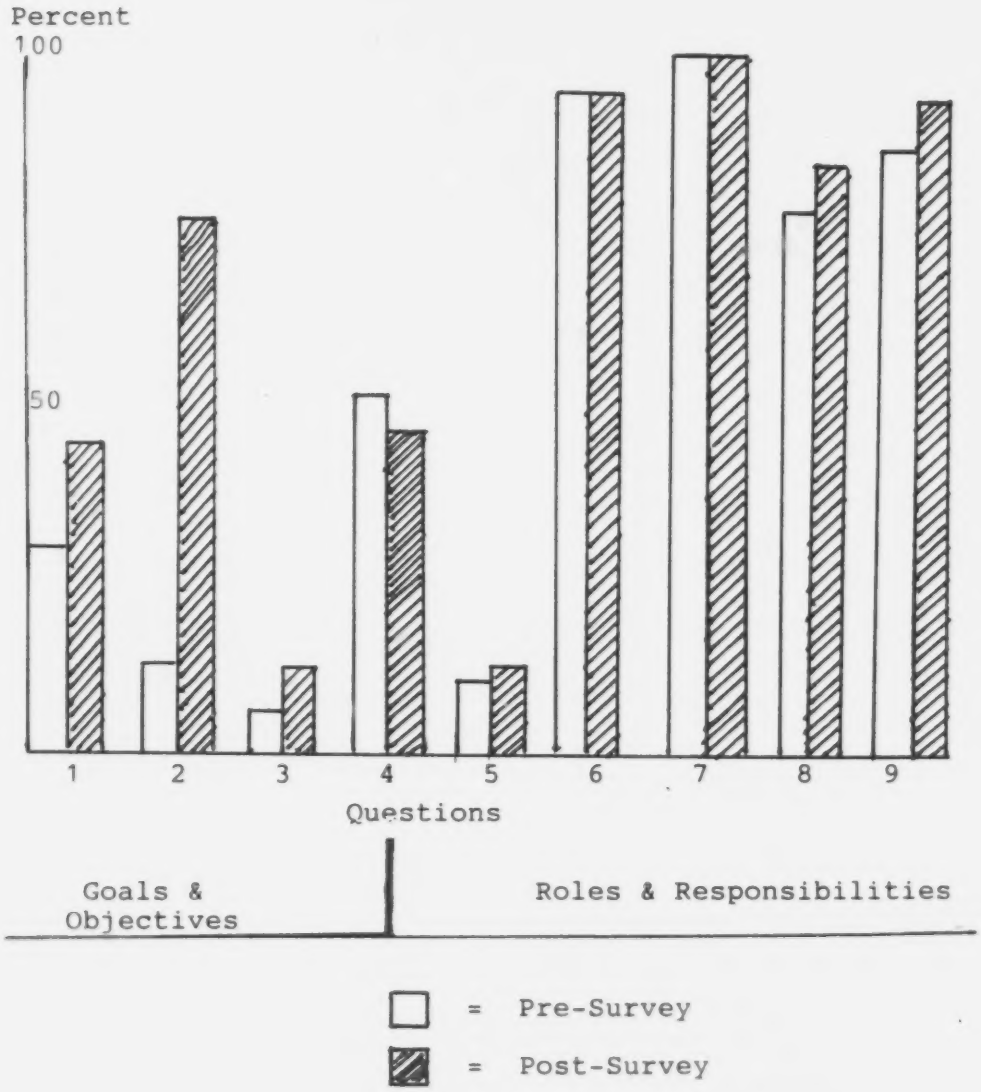
Participants were asked to identify the three primary methods of instruction in the Parent Education Program. In the pre-survey four correct answers were given. Twenty-three correct answers were recorded on the post-survey.

The third question of the survey asked the participants what the child study lab objectives were for the parents. The teachers listed 11 different objectives in the pre-survey; two were correct. In the post-survey, four correct objectives were listed.

The six remaining questions on the survey were designed to evaluate the knowledge gained by the teachers concerning their job descriptions as child study lab teachers. The objective was to increase the amount of information for the teachers concerning their responsibilities. Seven teachers correctly identified

Figure 1

Comparison of Inservice Pre- and Post Survey Questions
March, 1990



correctly their role to provide early childhood education for the children on the pre-survey, but when asked the same question on the post-survey, only five identified their role correctly.

Teachers were then asked to list four main objectives of the child study lab. Two teachers had no answers on the pre-survey and all gave responses on the post-survey. Four answers were correct on the pre-survey with an increase of one correct answer on the post-survey.

The pre-evaluations of the child study lab teacher's main responsibility indicated that seven understood that a teacher needed to utilize the parent's talents to enrich the program. Four identified that they needed to provide direction for the parents in the lab setting. One more correct responsibility was listed in the post-evaluation.

Before the inservice program, all the teachers indicated that they were familiar with the need to articulate the goals, the philosophy, and the curriculum of the children's program to the parents. The surveys also indicated that the teachers also understood the role of the instructor in the child study lab. This knowledge did not change on the postsurvey.

Finally, the participants were asked how the instructor and the lab teacher need to work together. Nine indicated on both surveys that both the teacher and instructor need to work together in order to observe the growth and progress of the children. On the pre-survey,

six felt that the teacher and instructor must work together to maintain high professional standards. Eight indicated this as an important factor on the post-survey.

An open-ended discussion and question session was designed to permit input into the process and to access the value of the orientation session. The target group requested more time to be set up for child study lab teachers to come together throughout the school year. They also discussed the need for a mentor when they first begin teaching in the program. It was suggested that assigning an experienced teacher to a new teacher in the program would help them learn their responsibilities and give them some support and guidance from their peer group. Another request that came from this discussion was for a handbook that contained information concerning all the aspects of the Parent Education Program. It was also recommended that the orientation program be held in the early fall for the incoming child study lab teachers. This group of teachers was very vocal about their needs. Some came with their own agendas, which could not be covered in the orientation session.

Through implementation of the proposed practicum, another goal was to reduce the number of turnovers in the targeted group of teachers. In a follow-up survey (Appendix E: 55), nine out of the ten participating teachers were returning to the program in the fall of 1990. The one teacher not returning is taking a leave

of absence for one year. In the Needs Survey for Lab Teachers (Appendix A: 48), the previous rate of teachers returning to their positions was 14 out of 21.

Conclusions

At the conclusion of the implementation of the inservice program, ten of the targeted group of child study lab teachers had participated and completed the pre- and post-surveys. The number of teachers who have a better understanding of the program goals was evident when the results for questions one, two, and three of the post-survey were compared with the same questions in the pre-survey. There was an increase in the percent of correct answers from the pre- to the post-survey (Figure 1). Ten percent more of those in the post-survey identified correctly the major goal of the child study lab. Thirteen percent identified the three primary methods of instruction in the class in the initial survey as compared to 77 percent in the follow-up survey. In identifying the Parent Education goals, there was an increase in correct answers on the follow-up survey. The goals and objectives need to be clearly identified in any program in order to make planning and implementation of the curriculum easier and more definite. It is important to remember that teachers new to the program often are too overwhelmed with their new responsibilities to absorb a working understanding of the goals and objectives of

the overall program. The small gain in knowledge of this programs's goals and objectives indicates that more time will be needed in the orientation program on the teaching of these goals. There also may have been too much for the teachers to assimilate in a one time session. The increase in this knowledge base of the target teacher's group, although small, is a step toward developing a well trained staff of teachers with and understanding of the program.

The target group of teachers indicated in the presurvey (Table 1) that they perceived some facets of their job extremely well. There was little difference in their answers to the pre- and post-test concerning their responsibilities in working with parents. Nevertheless, the post-survey indicated that the teachers perceived their role differently than before the inservice program. There was a seven percent decrease in correct answers on the post-survey. Perhaps the emphasis on the Parent Education Program goals had caused the teachers to consider their role as an assistant to the parent education instructor.

There was a slight increase in the percentage of correct knowledge gained about the child study lab's role in working with the parent education instructor and there was a 12 percent increase of correct answers concerning the role of the parent education instructor in the child study lab. In understanding the role that the teacher

and the instructor must have in working together, the post-survey indicated that the target group had gained six percent more knowledge. Although these increases are not highly significant, a clear understanding of staff roles will always be important to the development of a positive organizational climate. The teachers involved in this project had already developed a fairly clear perception of their role in this program. This could be due to the length of time the teachers had already been involved. Role identification is important to the morale of a staff and it will be important to continue to include clear job descriptions in the inservice program in order to reduce role-related stress. The clarification of roles is extremely important in the field of early childhood education because so many of the teachers and directors have similar duties (Jorde-Bloom, 1988).

This comparison of the pre- and post survey does indicate that knowledge was gained concerning the goals and objectives of the program and of the role of the teacher and instructor. The survey indicated that the target group gained more knowledge of the goals and objectives of the parent education program than in the understanding of their own roles in this program. This could logically be expected since the teachers had been teaching in the program for two-thirds of a year prior to the inservice training program. The teachers have seen "the trees before the forest". The research by Lilian

Katz (1977) identified the developmental stages of a teacher's career which concurs with this pattern. Teachers who are new to a program are working on a survival level. At this level, teachers need to have support, encouragement, and instruction in specific skills. The open-ended discussion held in the training session also revealed similar needs of the teachers. Katz found that training given to teachers should be by someone familiar with the situation. A mentor program would definitely be an asset to these teachers to help them acquire information for their survival stage of development.

The follow up survey to determine if the target group would remain in the program indicated that nine out of ten would be returning. It was difficult to determine if the inservice program made any contribution to this high rate of return. Jorde-Bloom (1988) has indicated that the quality of the professional environment does have an impact on the attitude of teachers. Inservice training is just one of the aspects of a professional program which can serve to develop commitment to the organization. This staff training stressed the development of a professional environment which served to promote a commitment to the program and will help to develop a future core of trained staff to further the goals and objectives of the program.

Recommendations

All staff members need to have a basic understanding of their organization so that their efforts can be directed towards the goals of the program. Since these goals are usually not the initial concern of new teachers, it may take time to assimilate this information. It may be beneficial for a staff to have an initial orientation to the program with a follow up training session and/or specific guidelines provided in written form that a staff member could use the guidelines as a reference.

The inservice training program developed for this practicum project was successful in helping teachers gain more knowledge of the Parent Education Program and an understanding of the role of the child study lab teacher. This training should be held in the fall of the year before school has begun so that it can serve as an overview of the program. This would also allow more available time for teachers to attend the orientation. A handbook should be developed which will reinforce the information presented in the inservice program.

Providing a mentor for each teacher would serve to help to provide training needs for each individual teacher. This mentor would help to develop a positive relationship that would foster friendly support for the new teacher within the program. Providing professional interactions with peers could help to develop a unified team spirit for the program. The mentor would be an experienced lab

teacher who has volunteered to give support, information, encouragement and/or instruction in specific skills.

In addition to the inservice program, the handbook, and the mentor program, a variety of other teacher workshops should be developed to meet the needs of the child study lab staff. These should follow the initial inservice training program in the fall. A needs assessment would be necessary to determine the topics of the workshops. It would be important to have these workshops scheduled at regular intervals to further the development of a professional environment.

The preceding recommendations match those developed in Chapter Four. Comprehensive, three part orientation programs are needed for successful staff training. There needs to be a basic orientation program at the beginning of an employee's assignment. This program is designed to explain the goals and objectives of the organization and job responsibilities to the staff members. This program also serves to begin the development of a positive work climate. The inservice program is then strengthened by the development of a structure for a mentor program which can be used at the beginning of the year with each new teacher and by the development of a handbook which contains the information on the structure of the organization.

Follow on

The writer received a curriculum development grant from the Dean of Instruction at the community college to begin work on a handbook for child study lab teachers who teach in the Parent Education Program. This handbook will be finished in September and will be used with the teachers during their inservice orientation program which will follow the same form as developed for this practicum. Copies of the handbook will also be provided to teachers who have been previously teaching in the child study labs. This handbook will also be shared at the state meeting for Parent Education Coordinators in October.

A mentor program is also being developed and each new teacher will be assigned an experienced peer to give support and help when a teacher requests. A survey has been made to determine which teachers would be interested in working in the mentor program. Guidelines are now being developed to help the mentor teachers with their role in this orientation process.

Opportunities for professional growth throughout the year will be provided by teacher workshops which will be held every six weeks at the college. Topics will be developed after determining the needs of the teachers in the fall.

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Appendix A:

NEEDS SURVEY FOR LAB TEACHERS

Please take a few minutes to respond to the following questions. The information you provide will be used to help improve the child study lab program. Please return to Judy. You do not need to sign your name. Thank you for your time.

1. Did you feel that you were provided with adequate information concerning your job description as a child study lab teacher?

YES NO

2. What information would have been helpful to you as you began teaching in the child study labs?

3. Which form of teacher orientation would be most helpful to you? Rank 1,2, 3 with #1 being your first choice.

Orientation with individual instructors

Group orientation of teachers

Handbook for teachers

4. In which areas would you like more information? Circle.

Working with parents

Curriculum development

Child development

Developing a learning environment

5. Are you returning to your position this fall? If not, why?

Appendix B:

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE PARENT COOPERATIVE

EDUCATION PROGRAMS

GOALS: The goal of the community college Parent Cooperative Preschool Education programs is to improve the parenting skills for parents of preschool children.

OBJECTIVES: Parent Education programs based in Parent Education Cooperative Preschools provide practical, experiential learning laboratories which have the following student objectives:

a. To develop realistic age-level expectations from knowledge learned in Parent Education classes.

b. To clarify child-rearing values and attitudes and to explore methods of child guidance.

c. To learn about the physical needs of family members: nutrition, safety, first aid, childhood illnesses, exercise and stress management.

d. To experience and understand the role of parent involvement in maintaining quality learning environments for children.

e. To develop skills and practice in teaching young children in the following areas: art, science, concept development, language, music, motor skills, and cooperative play.

f. To share support, consultation, and resource information concerning childbearing and family life.

g. To learn about contemporary family concerns such as child abuse, divorce, sexual assault, illness and death, and family resource management.

h. To develop skills in group organization and leadership.

i. To develop and/or increase confidence in managing the demanding role of parents in a changing society.

j. To strengthen family communication.

Appendix C: Inservice Survey

As a child study lab teacher, please fill out the following survey to the best of your knowledge. You may find more than one ansewer appropriate. Circle your answer or fill in the blanks.

1. The major goal of the Child Study Lab is to:
   a. Provide a safe learning environment for the children.
   b. Provide an intellectually stimulating environment for the children.
   c. To improve parenting skills for parents.

2. The three primary methods for instruction in the vocational parent education classes are:
   a.
   b.
   c.
3. Three student(parent) objectives which are provided by the parent education child study labs are:
   a.
   b.
   c.
4. The main role of the child study lab teacher is to:
   a. Assist the parent education instructor in her work with the parents.
   b. Provide an early childhood education for the children.
   c. Provide a variety of activities for the children.
5. The objective of the child study lab is to develop a program which facilitates:
   a.
   b.
   c.
   d.
6. The child study lab teacher's main responsibility in working with parents is to:
   a. Utilize the talents, energies and knowledge of the parents to enrich the program for the children and the adults.
   b. Conference with the parents concerning the progress of their child.
   c. Provide directions for parents for their work in the child study lab.
7. It is important for the child study lab teacher to articulate to the parents throughout the year the following:
   a. Goals
   b. Philosophy
   c. Curriculum
   d. All of the above.

Appendix C:

8. The parent education instructor's role in the child study lab is to:
   a. Assist the parents in learning parenting skills.
   b. Assist the child study lab teacher with special projects.
   c. To observe the children and become familiar with their developmental levels.
9. A child study lab teacher and parent education instructor need to work together to:
   a. Observe the growth and progress of the children individually and as a group.
   b. Develop the curriculum for the children's program.
   c. Maintain high professional standards, particularly in the area of confidentiality.

Thank you for your time and help with this project!

Appendix C:

ADDITIONAL USEFUL INFORMATION

Child Study Lab Teacher Inservice Program

Are you returning to the program in the fall of 1990?

If not, Why?

Would you like to be considered for participation in a mentor program for new child study lab teachers?

What is your passion as a teacher?

What would you like to know more about?

NAME:_____

Thank you!

Appendix D: Parent Education Coordinator's Survey

To: Parent Education Coordinators
Home and Family Life Coordinators

I am presently working on a master's project involving teacher training in the parent cooperative preschool programs. I need to know how other programs in the state are helping their new child study lab teachers begin their teaching experience. I know how busy you are, but it would really be helpful to me if you could take a few minutes to answer the following questions and return this form to me. Many thanks for your time and comments!

Is each Parent Education Instructor responsible for the orientation of their child study lab teachers to the general program? YES NO

Does your program have a group orientation designed for the lab teachers? YES NO

Are the teachers paid to attend the special orientation?
YES NO

Is attendance required and written into the teacher's contract?
YES NO

What topics are covered in your orientation session?
goals of the program
explanation of the state guidelines/program guidelines
working with parents
curriculum planning
other:

Are the Parent Education Instructors included in the orientation program? YES NO How are the instructors included?

Does your program have a handbook developed especially for teachers? YES NO

Does your program have a mentor component? (An established teacher assigned to help a new incoming teacher "learn the ropes").

Other information you might have to share??? Again, many thanks!

Appendix E: Outline for Child Study Lab Teachers' Inservice Program

I. Pre-survey, introductions and lunch.
Pre-survey is given to each participant as they are greeted at the door. Each teacher will be asked to make a nametag answering the following questions:
1. What age group do you work with?
2. What was something fun that you did with children this week?
3. What do you like to do for fun for yourself?
After the pre-survey was taken, all will be invited to have lunch and socialize. Desserts will be brought by the teachers and placed on a table were they will picked at random and shared.

II. Parent Education Goals and Job Descriptions
A. Discussion led by Parent Education Coordinator on goals
B. Discussion on teacher's role and job description led by a teacher and instructor

III. Working With Parents
A. Learning Styles/Understanding Differences
"How do you do life?" inventory
B. Problem Solving/Group Work
Each group is assigned a typical "parent problem". Solutions will be shared with the whole group.

IV. Needs Assessment
A. What information do child study lab teachers need?
B. Child study lab guidelines--how is your lab doing?
C. Future needs--what do you want to do, learn?

V. Post Evaluation Survey